

THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS (MI)

18 April 1981

Suspect in Threat On Bush Claims CIA Harrassment

By Jim Harger

A Lansing man who claims to be a target of harrassment by the Central Intelligence Agency was held in Kent County Jail on \$30,000 bond Friday for possessing firearms and threatening the life of Vice President George Bush.

John Wright, 39, was ordered held by U.S. Magistrate Hugh Brenneman after his initial appearance on the charges Friday afternoon.

Wright was arrested Thursday afternoon by Secret Service agents after he allegedly told a Lansing police officer he intended to kill the persons responsible for the alleged CIA harrassment.

Wright, who is unemployed, reportedly told the officer he planned to kill the CIA's director and Bush, who headed the CIA during the Ford administration.

The officer was called to Wright's home after Wright allegedly called a Lansing radio station and threatened the lives of its staff.

According to the charges brought by the U.S. Attorney's office, two rifles — one with a high-powered telescope — were found in his home.

Because Wright is a convicted felon, it is illegal for him to possess firearms. In April 1979, he was convicted in Lansing of carrying a concealed weapon.

If convicted for threatening Bush's life, Wright could receive up to five years in prison. He also could receive up to five years if convicted on the firearms charge.

Spokesmen for the U.S. Attorney's office and the Secret Service refused to comment.

During Wright's court appearance, Assistant U.S. Attorney J. Terrence Dillon argued for the \$30,000 bond, saying Wright has threatened other persons and has an unstable mental history. Wright's mother has attempted to have him committed several times, he said.

Lansing Police Sgt. Irvin Ruby said Wright is well-known among Lansing law enforcement officials for his frequent threats on visiting dignitaries.

"We've had contact with him almost every time we've had a dignitary come into town," said Ruby. "We just put surveillance on him and watch him until the person leaves."

Although Ruby said the man has no car or money, he apparently is well-educated.

"I think he's capable of doing what he says," said Ruby.

The tall, unkempt defendant denied the allegations.

"I believe these charges are false," Wright told Brenneman. "This is part of a continuing campaign of blackmail, harrassment, blacklisting and intimidation against myself by the Central Intelligence Agency and other police agencies under the control of the CIA."

In asking for a court-appointed attorney, Wright said he hoped to be represented by an attorney who was not averse to bringing his charges of CIA harrassment as a defense.

Wright will face a preliminary hearing Friday before Brenneman.